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# METRO *Life*

## LIFE IN THE PORTLAND METROPOLITAN AREA

### The Portland Observer

## Neighborhood Health Clinics, Inc. Seeks Support

A local services agency for low-income and uninsured people is seeking financial support to help renovate two abandoned houses in a Northeast Portland neighborhood. The Neighborhood Health Clinics, Inc., which operates the Health Help Clinic in Northeast Portland and Neighborcare in Southeast Portland, purchased the houses, which are in the King Neighborhood, to expand clinic and administrative services.

Last year, the clinics provided medical and dental care as well as pregnancy outreach and counseling programs to almost 10,000 people who have no health insurance and are ineligible to Medicaid benefits. Patients are asked to pay what they can.

Margaret Jozsa, Neighborhood Health Clinics, Inc. executive director, says growth and the need for serious repair to the present facility prompted them to look for a new location. They purchased the two abandoned houses at 4945 and 4957 N.E. Seventh Ave., at a cost of \$26,000. "Some of our services are severely hampered by lack of physical space," says Jozsa. "The new buildings will

give us enough room to house our prenatal care outreach program and increase our private and support group counseling so we can serve more people. Plus, it'll be wheel-chair accessible and give the staff a safe place to work to provide these critically needed services."

The renovations will cost over \$200,000. Earlier this year, M.J. Murdock Charitable Trust gave a \$100,000 grant. Half was given outright and the balance will be released when the total dollars needed for renovations are raised. A \$26,000 donation from Kaiser Permanente pushed the fundraising over the halfway mark.

Kaiser Permanente considers Neighborhood Health Clinics, Inc. a partner agency in the community, and since 1985 has made financial and in-kind donations. "We've traditionally supported agencies whose missions are to improve the health and livability in our communities," says David Tilford, MD, Kaiser Permanente's assistant medical director. "The Neighborhood Health Clinics' prevention programs and urgent care services give many individuals the opportunity to get their illnesses treated early, possibly avoiding more serious conditions later."

Thirty-seven Kaiser Permanente physicians, dentists, allied health personnel and other staff volunteer each month.

"We admire the Neighborhood Health Clinics' ability to encourage hundreds of health care professionals and other to give their time to volunteer," says Joanna Wilson, Murdock Charitable Trust program officer.

Commander Alan Orr of the Portland Police, North Precinct, supports the Neighborhood Health Clinics, Inc. purchase of these abandoned houses in an area with an overabundance of vacant properties. In addition to being abandoned for many years, the houses were vandalized and damaged by a range of illegal activities. "This is an opportunity to take back the neighborhood and not let it deteriorate," says Commander Orr. "The Neighborhood Health Clinics purchase and renovation of the boarded-up houses is a step toward revitalizing the King area to help make it safer for the residents and to reclaim it from criminal elements."

Franciscan Enterprises, Inc., a



Previously abandoned houses to be renovated for the Neighborhood Health Clinics, Inc.

non-profit community development corporation, will provide construction management services for the renovation. Over 100 Franciscan volunteers have completed interior demolition of the houses and will participate in the painting and landscaping phases

of the project.

Neighborhood Health Clinics, Inc. hold evening medical and dental care clinics in space donated by Multnomah County Health Department.

Businesses or individuals who would like to make a tax-deductible

contribution to the renovation fund should contact Margaret Jozsa at the Neighborhood Health Clinics, Inc. at (503) 288-5995 or send contributions to P.O. Box 11618, Portland, OR, 97211. Renovations will be completed by spring of 1994.

## "New" Abandoned Auto Program Brings Change

In July, the Abandoned Auto Program was transferred from the Bureau of Buildings to the Bureau of Traffic Management's Parking Patrol Division. A four point plan was developed to provide faster response to citizens and in September Commissioner Blumenauer brought to City Council the cornerstone of the plan. A new ordinance authorizing the City to tow certain abandoned vehicles, posing a public safety threat within 24 hours after the vehicle is posted by an inspector was passed unanimously by Council. Previously, the City was required to notify the registered owner and allow an additional 10 days before any abandoned vehicle could be removed, regardless of its condition. The city can now be more aggressive in removing abandoned vehicles that are partially dismantled, leaking fluids, have wheels removed, are not securely blocked or are full of garbage. Other changes to the program include internal staffing changes that have increased the work force in the

field reducing the response time between taking the original complaint and conducting a field inspection.

In response to City Council's adoption of the new 24-hour tow ordinance, over 100 volunteers joined forces on a Saturday morning in September with Commissioner Blumenauer's office, the City's Abandoned Auto Program, the Portland Police Bureau and the Bureau of Buildings for an Abandoned Auto Sweep. Within three hours volunteers and city staff achieved the following results:

- 270 abandoned vehicles were reported
- 91 vehicles were tagged with warnings
- 14 vehicles were tagged with the new 24-hour warning
- 4000 brochures were distributed door to door and to neighborhood groups

The Sweep was focused in three neighborhoods—St. Johns, Concorida and Lents—and had the participation of



Commissioner Earl Blumenauer and Abandoned Auto Program field inspector, Willie May, tagged one of the 265 abandoned vehicles identified by volunteers during the Abandoned Auto Sweep

six adjoining neighborhoods. The Abandoned Auto Sweep is just one example of how we can effectively coordinate the energy and commitment of citizens with the resources of our City's bureaus. Citizens interested

in coordinating a Sweep are encouraged to contact their Neighborhood Association. An Abandoned Auto Sweep resource list and brochures are available by calling Commissioner Blumenauer's office 823-3589.

## Community Service Targets High School Dropouts

Valuable job experience, educational advancement and the opportunity to improve their community await Oregon young people selected to participate in the Community Service Corps. Selection targets high school dropouts ages 16-24. Many programs include a scholarship award upon completion.

The Community Service Corps, one of two programs of the Oregon Youth Conservation Corps, is made possible through the state's Amusement Device Taxes paid by operators of videogames, videopoker machines and jukeboxes. The Corps is administered through the Oregon Commission on Children and Families, the state's largest advocacy group serving young people.

"We are delighted to have received more than a 50-50 match in funds to support these projects," said Becky Eklund, Program Director. "We are heartened at this demonstration of community support for this program

which provides great jobs plus excellent academic opportunities." \$292,990 of State funds will be combined with the additional \$689,908 leveraged dollars to fund these projects.

Projects selected are:

Multnomah County: Along the Columbia Slough Basin, a 10-member youth crew will cleanup streams, restore natural vegetation, and prevent erosion. Youth recruitment will be coordinated through Roosevelt High, the Youth Service Center and Open Meadow Learning Center. Other partners in the program are The Wetlands Conservancy/Urban Streams Council, the City of Portland and the Metropolitan Services District.

State Funds: \$41,454 Matching Funds: \$96,050

Jackson County: South Ashland, in the Hamilton Creek Watershed, a six member crew is building a

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## Violence In Schools: Making Young Criminals

by Peter Lewis

Our public schools of today are not the places they were 25 or 50 years ago. And it is not just that academic standards have declined. Those of us with a few decades under their belts will remember when chewing gum or talking in class were major offenses—things that could land you a much dreaded visit to the principal's office.

Today, schools have become a jungle of criminality and potential violence. The National Education Association, for instance, tells us as many as 100,000 students tote guns to class everyday. And teaching is rapidly becoming a high-risk profession. Daily, 6,250 teachers are threatened with injury and 260 are actually assaulted by students.

If the lives of teachers are being threatened, what about the lives of students? For every teacher assaulted, how many children are similarly attacked by their fellow students?

When we must enforce discipline in schools with armed guards patrol-

ling corridors—guards designed to deter criminality and violence on the part of children—we really do have to wonder what is going on. The media used to be filled with stories about kids who couldn't read. Today, we hear about the sexual promiscuity and rapes, the drug dealing, the violence—all of it being perpetrated by children, many not even in their teens.

What is the solution to all this? More armed guards patrolling school corridors? Or perhaps arming the teachers? (The way things are going, this might be seriously considered, heaven forbid, within a decade or two.)

There has to be a better solution. Statistics really give us an important clue to what that solution might be. According to the U.S. Department of Education, 85% of juvenile offenders have trouble reading. As well, 60% of adult prison inmates are illiterate.

The connection between juvenile crime and illiteracy might seem esoteric at first. Certainly no one is

suggesting that Little Johnny throws down his reading or math book and immediately starts blazing away with an automatic weapon to vent his frustration.

But think about it. What does our high-tech world offer to a teenager who is desperately failing in school and who secretly believes he will never get the education he needs to be able to earn a good living for himself?

Look at the media interviews with teenage gang members. The common theme that runs through what these youngsters say about gangs and violence is the hopelessness and despair they feel. They cling to their gangs and violence because these provide a sense of identity, a sense of belonging to something.

While this is certainly an oversimplification of the problem, it is nevertheless interesting that when reading and literacy problems are handled amongst children, the violence and criminality tends to be significantly reduced.

At least this is the experience of Applied Scholastics, an organization dedicated to improving the quality of education using the educational discoveries of American author L. Ron Hubbard.

"For too long, I believe that the correlation between child violence and poor academic performance has been ignored," said John Ellis, an Applied Scholastics tutor in Los Angeles who has experience with literacy programs for juvenile offenders.

Ellis described one project in which he tutored over 150 incarcerated juvenile offenders over a period of six months.

"These were serious offenders, charged mostly with murder or attempted murder," he said. "At the start of the project, the authorities were very skeptical. 'You really can't do anything with these kids,' they told me repeatedly."

"About 95% of these children were functionally illiterate," he said.

"So that was the entry point we went in on—teaching them phonics and reading. And because the methods Applied Scholastics uses greatly speeds up the educational process, these children began to read on their own in a very short period of time."

"After a few months, one would find books in all their rooms, for instance. And the kids themselves pushed for a library which was supposed to be in the facility but had never been established before."

"According to the guards, the number of fights in the jail decreased dramatically during the same period," Ellis adds. "Really though, you could see the difference in the kids. A few came up to me or wrote to me after the project was completed. 'I don't have to break the law or hurt people any more,' they would say. 'You've given me power I never had before.'"

The offenders Ellis worked with are what our society regards mainly as hopeless cases. Yet, based on the work of Applied

Scholastics, there is even hope for them. So what about our schools? Would not the same methods not only improve educational levels, but also reduce violence and crime here amongst children who have not yet gone over the edge? Applied Scholastics believes they would.

The bottom line is that our schools need to teach youngsters all the skills they need to participate effectively and honestly in our society. And if they don't, it should be no mystery that a lot of children begin to use extreme methods to get what they want.

Forget increasing the number of armed guards in schools. Let's get education back on track instead.

For more information on Applied Scholastics and its programs, please call 1-800-424-5397 or write to 7060 Hollywood Blvd., Suite 200, Los Angeles, CA, 90028.